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ART. II.—*Does the Vaiśeṣhika Philosophy acknowledge a Deity, or not?* By J. Muir, Esq., D.C.L., LL.D.

IN the paper on the Indian Materialists, lately published in the Journal of this Society (Vol. XIX, p. 313), I have expressed a doubt whether the Vaiśeṣhika philosophy is not atheistic. As the aphorisms of the Vaiśeṣhika, lately published in Calcutta, in the "Bibliotheca Indica,"¹ have been received in Europe since the paper in question was read, I have had an opportunity of testing the opinion then put forward by a reference to the primary authority for the tenets of this system; and, although I do not pretend to have studied the essential principles of this school of philosophy so as to be able to assert whether its theory of the universe is founded on theism or on atheism, I find some aphorisms which, in opposition to the Mīmāṃsakas, assert—1st, that the Vedas are the product of an intelligent mind; and 2ndly (if the interpretation of the commentator is to be received), that they have been uttered by God.

Assuming that these aphorisms are genuine, and that they have been correctly interpreted, it will result that the Vaiśeṣhika system is not atheistic, or, at least, that whatever the author's theory of creation may have been, he was unwilling to deny the existence of a supreme intelligence and his agency in reference to the revelation of the Veda.

Of the aphorisms which I am about to quote, the first has been translated by Dr. Ballantyne, and it, as well as the others, is briefly commented upon by Professor Banerjea in his "Dialogues on Hindu Philosophy," p. 474 f., and Pref. p. ix. note.

Aphorism i., 1, 3.—"The authority of the Vedic record arises from its being uttered by him."

In the preceding aphorism, righteousness had been defined as that through which happiness and future perfection are attained. The commentator then proceeds thus:—

¹ Only a small portion of these aphorisms had been previously published, with a translation, by Dr. Ballantyne.

i., 1, 3.—“But may it not be objected here that it is the Veda which proves that righteousness, in the form of abstinence from action, is, by means of the knowledge of absolute truth, the cause of future perfection; but that we dispute the authority of the Veda because it is chargeable with the faults of falsehood, contradiction, and tautology¹ And further, there is nothing to prove the authority of the Veda, for its eternity is disputed, its eternal faultlessness is doubted, and if it have a personal author, the fact of this person being a competent utterer is doubted; since there is a risk of error, inadvertence, uncertainty, and want of skill attaching to him. Thus there is neither any such thing as future perfection, nor is either a knowledge of absolute truth, or righteousness, the instrument thereof. Thus everything is perplexed.”

In answer to all this the author of the aphorism says:—

i., 1, 3.—“The authority of the Vedic record arises from its being uttered by him.”

“Here,” says the commentator, “the word *tad* (His) refers to Ívara (God); as, though no mention of Him has yet been introduced, He is proved by common notoriety to be meant; just as in the aphorism of Gautama:—‘Its want of authority is shown by the faults of falsehood, contradiction, and tautology,’ the Veda, though not previously introduced, is intended by the word *tad*.²

“And so [the meaning of the aphorism is that] the authority of the sacred record, *i.e.*, the Veda, is proved by its being spoken by Him, composed by Him, by Ívara. Or, *tad* (its)² may denote *dharma* (duty) which immediately precedes; and then [the sense will be that] the authority of the sacred record, *i.e.*, the Veda, arises from its declaring, *i.e.*, establishing, duty, for the text which establishes any authoritative matter must be itself an authority. The proof of Ívara and his competence will be hereafter stated.” The commentator then goes on to answer the charges of falsehood, contradiction, and tautology alleged against the Veda.

The next aphorism which I shall quote (vi., 1, 1) is thus introduced by the commentator:—

“An examination of righteousness and unrighteousness, which are the original causes of the world,³ forms the subject of the

¹ Here the same illustrations are given as in the commentary on the Nyāya aphorisms, quoted in my Sanskrit Texts, vol. iii., pp. 78, ff.

² For the sake of those who do not read Sanskrit, it may be mentioned that *tad* being in the crude, or uninflected form, may denote any of the three genders, and may be rendered either “he,” “she,” or “it.”

³ This, I believe, means that the existence of the world in its present o

6th section. Now, righteousness and unrighteousness are to be constituted by virtue of such injunctions as these: 'The man who desires paradise should sacrifice,' 'Let no one eat tobacco,' &c., provided these injunctions and prohibitions be authoritative. And this authoritativeness depends upon the fact of the utterer [of these injunctions or prohibitions] possessing the quality of understanding the correct meaning of sentences, for the supposition of inherent authoritativeness is untenable. The author, therefore, first of all enters upon the proof of that quality which gives rise to the authoritativeness of the Veda.

"Aphorism vi., 1, 1.—'There is in the Veda a construction of sentences which is produced (*lit.* preceded) by intelligence.'

"The 'construction of sentences,' the composition of sentences, is 'produced by intelligence,' i.e., by a knowledge of the correct meaning of sentences on the part of the utterer [of them]; [and this is proved] by the fact of these sentences possessing an arrangement like the arrangement of such sentences as 'There are five fruits on the river side,' composed by such persons as ourselves. 'In the Veda,' i.e., in the collection of sentences (so called). Here the construction of the sentences composing the collection is the proposition which is asserted. Nor is the contrary (i.e., the unauthoritativeness of the Veda) proved by its being a [limited] intelligence, such as ours, which produced these sentences. [Because it was *not* a limited intelligence which produced them.] For it is not an object of apprehension to the understandings of persons like ourselves that such injunctions as, 'He who desires paradise should sacrifice,' are the instruments of obtaining what we desire, or that the desired results will follow. Hence in the case of the Veda the agency of a self-dependent person is established (since these matters could be known by such a person alone).¹ And since the meaning of the Veda is not the subject of knowledge produced by any proof distinct from the proof [arising] from words and their dependant [ideas]—*Vedicity*, or the characteristic nature of the Veda consists in its being composed of words which possess an authority

developed form, is necessary in order to furnish the means of rewarding righteousness and punishing unrighteousness. But, as I believe the Indian philosophers regard the eternal soul as incapable of action, and thus of righteousness, or unrighteousness, prior to its becoming embodied, it is difficult to see how righteousness and unrighteousness, which are themselves effects dependent on the existence of the world, can be its causes. Perhaps the explanation will be, that all things are considered to revolve in an eternal cycle.

¹ Here the writer *assumes* that the Vedic ceremonies will be followed by the desired results in another world, as he is not arguing with those who would deny this.

springing from a knowledge of the meaning of sentences composed of words."

I will introduce the next aphorism (x., 2, 9,) which I propose to cite (and which is a repetition of Aphorism i., 1, 3,) by adducing some remarks of the commentator on the one which immediately precedes it, viz., x., 2, 8:—

"Now all this will be so, provided the Veda is authoritative: but this condition is difficult to attain; for you do not hold, like the Mimāṃsakas, that the authority of the Veda arises from its eternal faultlessness; since you admit that it has a personal author, and error, inadvertence, and a desire to deceive are incident to such a person. It is with a view to this objection that the writer says in his aphorism, 'In the absence of what is seen,' *i. e.*, in the absence of those personal faults which are seen in other persons like ourselves,¹ such as error, inadvertence, and the desire to deceive; for the Supreme Person who is inferred from the creation of the world, or the authorship of the Veda, can only exist in a state of freedom from fault; and, consequently, neither want of meaning, nor contradiction of meaning, nor uselessness of meaning, can be predicated of his words. Incorrectnesses in words are possible when they are occasioned by error, inadvertence, or unskillfulness, arising from some defect of the elements, the senses, or the mind. But none of these things is possible in the word of Īśvara (the Lord). And this has been expressed in the following verse: 'A speaker may utter falsehood, from being possessed by affection, ignorance, and the like; but these [defects] do not exist in God; how then can he speak what is otherwise [than true]?'"

"But may not the fact that the Veda is composed by this God be disputed? In consequence of this, the author says (in the next aphorism):—

x., 2. 9. 'The authority of the Vedic record arises from its being uttered by Him.'

"Thus at the end of his treatise [the writer lays it down that] the authority of the Veda is derived from its being His word, viz., from its being spoken, *i. e.*, composed by Him, *i. e.*, by Īśvara. As thus: The Vedas, now, are derived from a person, because they are formed of sentences. This has been proved. And persons like ourselves cannot be conceived as the utterers of these Vedas,

¹ A different interpretation is given by the commentator to this phrase *apishābhāve*, in an earlier aphorism in which it occurs, viz., vi., 2, 1. He there understands it to mean that *where there is no visible motive* for a prescribed action, an *invisible* one must be presumed.

which are distinguished by having thousands of Śākhās (recensions), because their purport is such as to lie beyond the reach of the senses; and persons like us have no perception of any thing beyond the reach of the senses. Further, the Vedas [are not only derived from a personal author, but they] have been uttered by a *competent* person (*āpta*), because they have been embraced by great men. Whatever has not been uttered by a competent person is not embraced by great men: but this (book) is embraced by great men: therefore it has been uttered by a competent person. Now, composition by a *self-dependent* person¹ is utterance by a *competent* person; and the reception (of the Veda) by great men is the observance of its contents by persons who are adherents of all the different philosophical schools: and (the infallibility of the Veda is defended by that which) has been already said, viz., that any occasional failure in the effects (of ceremonies prescribed in the Veda) is owing to some defect in the rite or in the performer, or in the instruments employed [and not to any fallibility in the Veda].

“If it be objected to this reasoning, that no author (of the Veda) is recollected, we rejoin, that this is not true, because it has been formerly proved that the author is remembered. And that it was composed by Him is proved by the simple fact of its being composed by a self-dependent person; and because it has been said that the self-dependence [or unassisted ability] of people like us in the composition of the Veda, consisting, as it does, of a thousand Śākhās, is inconceivable. And since authority (in a writing in general) springs from a quality, it necessarily follows that the authority of the Veda also springs from a quality. And here the quality in question must be declared to be the speaker’s knowledge of the correct meaning of sentences. And thus (we have shewn that) there is such an utterer of the Veda, who possesses an intuitive knowledge of paradise, and of the yet unseen consequences of actions, &c., and such an utterer is no other than Iśvara. Thus all is satisfactory.”

The ultimate proofs, then, of the binding authority of the Veda are, according to the commentator, 1st, its extent and subject-matter and, 2ndly, its unanimous reception by great men, adherents of all the different orthodox systems. Of course these arguments have no validity except for those who see something supernatural in the Veda, and on the assumption that the great men who embraced it were infallible; and therefore as against the Bauddhas and other heretics who saw nothing miraculous in the

¹ See the note at the end of this paper.

Vedas, and consequently regarded all their adherents as in error, they were utterly worthless. But it does not appear to be the object of the commentator, and perhaps not of the author of the Aphorisms, to state the ultimate reasons on which the authority of the Vedas would have to be vindicated against heretics, but merely to explain the proper grounds on which the orthodox schools who already acknowledged that authority ought to regard it as resting; *i.e.*, not as the Mīmāṃsakas held, on their eternal faultlessness, but on their being uttered by an intelligent and omniscient author; whose authorship, again, was proved by the contents of the Vedas having reference to unseen and future matters of which only an omniscient Being could have any knowledge; while the fact of these revelations in regard to unseen things having actually proceeded from such a Being, and being therefore true, was guaranteed by the unanimous authority of the wisest men among the faithful.

It may be said that the proof of the theistic character of the Vaiśeṣika system is little, if at all, strengthened by the texts which I have adduced from the aphorisms, as the concluding text (x., 2, 9) is a mere repetition of Aphorism i., 1, 3, which had been previously discussed, and the sense of which is disputed; while the other passage (vi., 1, 1) merely declares that the Veda is the work of an intelligent author, but does not assert that that author is God.¹ But I think that the Aphorism vi., 1, 1, throws some light upon the object and sense of the other two, as it shows that the question regarding the authorship of the Veda was one which occupied the attention of the composer of the aphorisms. I may further observe that the alternative explanation which the commentator gives of the Aphorism i., 1, 3, *viz.*, that the authority of the Veda arises from its being declarative of duty, is a much less probable one than the other, that its authority is derived from its being the utterance of God; for it does not clearly appear how the *subject* of a book can establish its authority; and, in fact, the commentator, when he states this interpretation, is obliged, in order to give it the least appearance of plausibility, to assume the authoritative character of the precepts in the Veda, and from this assumption to infer the authority of the book which delivers them. I may also observe that Jayanārāyaṇa Tarkapañchānaṇa the author of the "Gloss on Śaṅkara Miśra's Commentary," takes no

¹ The purport of this and the following aphorisms is not correctly rendered by Professor Banerjea (p. 474), in the words, "The composition of sentences and the rules of alms giving contained in the Vedas are according to reason." The true sense has been given above.

notice of the alternative interpretation alluded to; and that in his comment on the same aphorism, when it is repeated at the close of the work at x., 2, 9, Śāṅkara Miśra himself does not put it forward a second time.

Besides the aphorisms already adduced, there are two others, ii., 1, 18, and 19 (p. 93 ff), which are regarded by the commentators as establishing the existence of a Deity. These aphorisms are thus introduced by Śāṅkara Miśra:—

“Having thus concluded the section on the wind, he now, in answer to the question, whether the names given to the wind in the Veda (see the comment on the 17th aphorism) do not resemble the names *ditttha*, *daritttha*, senselessly jabbered by the insane, proceeds to prove that the Veda has been composed by an omniscient person; and desiring to commence an introductory section on the Deity, he says, Aphorism 18, ‘But name and work are signs of beings superior to ourselves.’

“*Saṁjñā* means ‘name;’ ‘work’ means ‘an effect,’ such as the earth, &c. Both of these things are signs of the existence of beings superior to ourselves, viz., God, and the great rishis. He explains how this is, in Aphorism 19, ‘Because name and work proceed from perception (or intuition) [of the thing named, or of the substance of the thing made].’

“Here the sense arising from the copulative combination (*samāhāra-dvandva*) of the two words ‘name’ and ‘work’ is akin to that of unity, and indicates that there is no distinction between the imposer of the name and the maker of the world. As thus: He to whom heaven and the unseen future are apparent, is alone able to give the names of ‘heaven,’ and ‘unseen future;’ just as a father, &c., imposes the names of Chaitra and Maitra on the visible persons of his sons Chaitra and Maitra. In the same way the imposition of the names ‘jar’ and ‘cloth’ depends upon the sign instituted by the Deity. Whatever word is applied by Him to any object as its sign, is correctly so applied. Thus an intimation (or proposition) like this: ‘every plant which has been touched by the tip of a weasel’s¹ grinder destroys the poison of a serpent,’ is a sign which leads us to infer beings superior to such as ourselves. And so also the name of Maitra, &c., given by a father to his son is also certainly imposed by God, through the instrumentality of such precepts as this, viz.: ‘Let a father give a name on the twelfth day.’ And thus it is proved that a name is a sign [denoting the existence] of God. In the same way work also, or effect, is a

¹ Weasels are known to be great destroyers of serpents.

sign of the Deity. As thus: The earth, &c., has a maker, since it is an effect (*lit.* a thing to be made), like a jar, &c."

The commentator proceeds to enter on a very abstruse discussion, in which I shall not attempt to follow him.

Note to page 26.

It is not probable that, in these words, the commentator intends to represent the term *āpta*, "a competent person," as commenturate, and convertible, with *sva-tantra puruṣa*, "a self-dependent person." It is more likely that he merely means to say that the "self-dependent person" must, *à fortiori*, be "competent." If this be a correct interpretation of his meaning, it will remain doubtful whether the author of the Nyāya aphorisms, who bases the authority of the Vedas on that of the "competent person" by whom they were uttered, intended by that term to denote the Deity. For the Tarka Sangraha (Sanskrit Texts, iii., 209), which distinguishes sentences into "Vedic" and "Secular," and ascribes the former to the Deity as their author, considers one class of "secular" sentences also to be authoritative, because they are uttered by a "competent person" (*āpta*). Vātsāyana also, a commentator, cited by Professor Banerjea, in his dialogues on Hindu philosophy (and after him, in my Sanskrit Texts, part iii., p. 210), defines a "competent person" (*āpta*) as one who has an intuitive perception of duty—(*sāxāt-kṛta-dharmā*,—a word which is employed in the Nirukta i., 20, as an epithet of the rishis),—an instructor possessed by the desire of communicating some subject-matter just as it was *seen* by him." According to this writer, "the intuitive perception of the subject-matter constitutes 'competence' (*āpti*), and a person who has this 'competence,' is 'competent.'"¹

As it is a matter of some interest to know what is the nature of inspiration, or supernatural knowledge, as conceived by the Vaiśeshikas, I shall quote some passages bearing on this subject from the aphorisms, or from their expounder, Śaṅkara Miśra. In his remarks on Aphorism viii., 1, 2 (p. 357), the commentator states that knowledge (*jñāna*) is of two kinds, true (*vidyā*) and false (*avidyā*); and that the former (*vidyā*) is of two descriptions, arising from perception (*pratyakṣa*), inference (*anumāna*), recollection (*smṛiti*), and inspiration (*ārsha*, the knowledge "peculiar to rishis"). Perception or intuition, again, is of different kinds or degrees (Aphorisms ix., 1, 11—15, pp. 385 ff). Aphorism xi., 1, 11 (p. 386), is as follows:—

¹ The Kuṣumāṇjali argues against the supposition of a created person being the author of the Veda. Sanskrit Texts, iii., p. 213.

"From a particular conjunction of both the soul and the mind¹ with the soul, arises the perception (or intuition) of soul." On this the commentator remarks:—"There are two kinds of *yogins* (intent, or contemplative, persons), (1) those whose inner sense is fixed (*samāhitāntahkaranāḥ*), who are called (*yuktāḥ*) united (i.e., with the object of contemplation), and (2) those whose inner sense is not fixed, and who are called 'disunited' (*viyuktāḥ*). Of these the first class, who are called 'united,' fix their minds with reverence on the thing which is to be the object of intuition, and seek to contemplate it. In this way, in their souls knowledge arises regarding their own souls, and the souls of others. 'Intuition of soul;' that is, a knowledge in which soul is the perceptible object of intuition. Thus, although persons like our ourselves have sometimes a knowledge of soul, yet from this knowledge being affected by ignorance, it has been said to be like what is unreal. 'From a particular conjunction of the soul and the mind;' that is, from the grace arising from the righteousness produced by *yoga*, which is a particular conjunction of the soul and the mind." See also Aphorism 15, p. 390.

At the conclusion of his remarks (in p. 408) on the third sort of true knowledge (referred to in p. 357), viz., recollection, the commentator remarks that the author of the aphorisms does not make any separate mention of the fourth kind of knowledge, viz. inspiration. "Inspired (*ārsha*) knowledge," he says, "is not separately defined by the author of the aphorisms, but is included in the intuition of *yogins*.² But the following statement has been made (in reference to it) in the section on the categories: 'Inspired (*ārsha*) knowledge is that which, owing to a conjunction of the soul and the mind, independent of inference, &c., and owing to a particular species of virtue, illuminates those rishis who have composed the record of the Vedas (*āmnāya-vidhātṛṇām*), in reference to such matters, whether past, future, or present, as are beyond the reach of the senses, or in reference to matters of duty, &c., recorded in books,' &c. And this sort of knowledge is also sometimes obtained by ordinary persons, as when a girl says, 'my heart tells me that my brother will go to-morrow.'" See also Aphorism ix., 2, 13, pp. 414, 415.

¹ The "mind" (*manas*) is regarded by the Indian philosophers as distinct from the soul, and as being merely an internal organ.

² It had been already noticed by Professor Max Müller in the "Journal of the German Oriental Society," vii., p. 311, that "the Vaiseshikas, like Kapila, include the intuition of enlightened rishis under the head of *pratyakṣa*, and thus separate it decidedly from *aitihya* 'tradition.'" He also quotes the commentator's remark about the girl, which he thinks is not "without a certain irony."

ERRATA.

ART. II.

In page 29, line 5 from the bottom of text, for "two descriptions," *read* "four descriptions."

ART. III.

In page 46, lines 2, 6, 11, 15, 19, 24, 28, instead of "I am greater than one who does not exist" *read* "I am yet greater than that."—This mistake arose from supposing *asatak*, instead of *atuh*, to be the reading in the corresponding passages of the original

ART. IV.

page 49, line 3 (title), for "Nieman" *read* "Niemann."

" " 10 for "Rader Tumenggung" *read* "Raden Tumenggung."

50 " 4 for "Zamenang" *read* "Famenang."

" " 25 for "Zaku" *read* "Paku."

" " 27 for "Jotjokarta" *read* "Jogjokarta."

" " 40 for "better than all" *read* "best of all."

51 " 5 for "Kerdenh" *read* "Kendeng."

" " 13 for "Zaku" *read* "Paku."

" " 14 for "Crawford" *read* "Crawfurd."